

DRAFT

Rockville Environment Commission Minutes of the Meeting of Thursday, September 3, 2015

Diamondback Conference Room, City Hall,
111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, Maryland

Attendance

Commissioners Present: John Becker, Steve Cardon, Alicia Hosmer, Amanda Matheny, Clark Reed, Lea Rosenbohm, Steve Sprague, and Helen Triolo.

Commissioners Absent: Scott Clausen

City Staff: Erica Shingara (Environmental Management)

Guests: none

Meeting Commencement and Introductions

The meeting convened at 7:03 pm by Chair Reed.

Meeting Agenda Review and Revision

Commissioner Becker requested the addition of reappointments and vacancies to new business.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Becker moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to approve the August 6, 2015 meeting minutes. The motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner Triolo and Commissioner Hosmer absent for the vote.

Proposed Revisions to Forest and Tree Preservation Ordinance (FTPO)

Commissioner Rosenbohm circulated a draft memo to the Mayor and Council to serve as a starting point for the Commission's comments and recommendations on the proposed FTPO changes. The Commission held discussions on the following items:

1. *Forest conservation calculations for previously developments sites.* The Commission discussed whether to provide comments on the process for the approval of recent changes to calculations for previously developed sites for Montgomery College. Commission Sprague suggested an alternative strategy that is based on pervious area impacted to encourage redevelopment of existing impervious area. Commissioner Cardon moved and Commissioner Becker seconded a motion to include language that the Commission respectfully disagrees with the increase to the 50% threshold. The motion passed unanimously.
2. *The proposed reduction of the current \$5 fee-in-lieu to \$1.15 for government projects and possible reduction for non-government projects.* Commissioner Sprague moved and Commissioner Hosmer seconded a motion to break up this issue into the following three votes:
 - The Commission was unanimously in favor that the fee in-lieu for non-government entities remains at \$5 per sq. ft.
 - The Commission was divided on a proposal for the fee in-lieu to remain at \$5 per sq. ft. for government projects (4-4).
 - If the fee in-lieu for government projects were reduced, the Commission was unanimous in recommending that the rate be no lower than \$3 per sq. ft.

3. *Exemption for stormwater management and stream restoration projects.* Erica Shingara described that the State established an exemption to the normal forest conservation process to help facilitate stream restoration and stormwater management projects, which are key components of the State's efforts to meet the nutrient and sediment pollution reduction requirements of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. Although it is identified as an exemption, the projects will still be required to avoid and minimize impacts to forests, replant on site at an equivalent number of trees to be removed by the project, and establish a maintenance agreement for the replacement of trees. This exemption essentially helps streamline the process for projects (mostly City CIP stream restoration and stormwater management projects). Commissioner Becker moved and Commissioner Rosenbohm seconded a motion to recommend inclusion of the state exemption for stormwater management and stream restoration projects provided that it streamlines the process and not impact forest conservation measures. The motion passed unanimously.
 4. *Vacant single family lot tree replacement requirements.* Commissioner Hosmer moved and Commissioner Sprague seconded a motion to not simplify the tree replacement requirements for individual vacation single-family lots. The motion passed unanimously.
 5. *Duration of forest conservation maintenance agreement.* Commissioner Matheny moved and Commissioner Rosenbohm seconded a motion to maintain the 5-year warranty and maintenance period to achieve higher tree survival rates. The motion passed (7-1).
- **Action item:** Commissioner Rosenbohm will revise and recirculate the memo on the FTPO for the Commission to review.

Watts Branch Watershed Assessment

Commissioner Matheny and Commissioner Cardon reported on the Watershed Committee's review of the Watts Branch Watershed Assessment. It is an update to the 2001 Watts Branch watershed assessment that compares current conditions to the previous assessment for benchmarking; updates previous hydrology models with new land uses for King Farm and Fallsgrove; and evaluates completed CIP projects. The health of the watershed is generally impaired and sediment is a primary pollutant. This condition is expected given that approximately 44% of the watershed is impervious and studies indicate watersheds are impaired with greater than 10% impervious area. The assessment also reevaluated past CIP projects to assess success—4 out of 6 were successful with the others had areas with spot erosion. While the 2001 assessment included project recommendations, the 2015 assessment does not include specific project recommendations because some projects are still in the pipeline and stream conditions may change by the time future funding may be available. The Watershed Committee recommended endorsement of the assessment. Commissioner Matheny moved and Commissioner Hosmer seconded a motion to endorse the Watts Branch Watershed study. The motion passed unanimously.

Environment Commission Budget

Due to time constraints this item was tabled to the next meeting.

Backyard Habitats

Commission Hosmer provided an update on the backyard habitat program. She described discussions with Ann Goodman on the status of community certification and with EMD about the availability of outreach materials that can be shared with the Commission.

- **Action Item:** Commissioner Hosmer will develop an outreach plan, check with Ann Goodman and EMD for outreach materials, and organize volunteers for a late September Farmer's Market booth.

Environment Management Update

- Erica Shingara reviewed the upcoming items:
 - Volunteer Appreciation Event at the Glenview Mansion (9/10)
 - Green Your Backyard Info Session (9/12). Erica Shingara will check with Shannon Philbin to include backyard habitats information in the session
 - Montgomery County Green Bank Forum (9/16) at the F. Scott Fitzgerald Theatre.
 - Public Hearing on Water Quality Protection Ordinance (9/21).
 - Montgomery County Service Day and Maryvale Stream Cleanup (10/24)
 - The City received a solar power purchase agreement proposal for solar installations four City facilities with favorable pricing based on a Montgomery County contract. More information on the proposal will be included in October.

New Business

- Updates on vacancies and reappointments to be included in the next meeting.

Adjourn

The Commission adjourned by acclamation at 9:26 p.m.

Next Commission Meeting

The next Commission meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, October 1, 2015 at 7:00 pm** in the **Diamondback Conference Room at the Rockville City Hall, 111 Maryland Avenue,** Rockville Maryland 20850-2321. The public is invited to attend.